

Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 291411Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9320
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5732

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SY, PLO
SUBJECT: KHALID FAHUM SEES KHALIL AL-WAZIR AS EMERGING FATAH
STRONGMAN

1. RELIABLE PALESTINIAN SOURCE CLOSE TO PNC CHAIRMAN KHALID
FAHUM TOLD US OF HIS TALK WITH FAHUM AUGUST 28 IN WHICH
LATTER ASSERTED THAT KHALI- AL-WAZIR WAS, IN HIS OPINION,
STRONGEST CURRENT LEADER WITHIN FATAH. ACCORDING TO SOURCE,
WAZIR CONTROLLED TOUGHEST GROUP OF FIGHTERS IN FATAH AND
ALSO HAD SOME INPUT INTO DECISIONS CONCERNING DISBURSEMENT
OF FATAH FUNDS. FAHUM CLAIMED SALAH KHALAF HAD "GONE OVER"
TO EGYTPIANS, BUT WAZIR COULD BE A "BRIDGE" BETWEEN PLO AND
SYRIANS. FAHUM BELIEVES WAZIR "FLIRTING" WITH SYRIANS.
AS FOR ARAFAT, FAHUM CLAIMS HE HAS LOST EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF
PLO.

2. SOURCE DISCUSSED SYRIAN STRATEGY IN LEBANON WITH FAHUM.
FAHUM REPORTEDLY BELIEVES THAT TIME FOR CONFRONTATION
WITH PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS HAS PASSED. FAHUM
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EXPECTS SYRIA WILL MAINTAIN STEADY PRESSURE ON ITS

OPPONENTS IN LEBANON BUT WILL NOT TRY TO CRUSH THEM
MILITARILY.

3. COMMENT: FAHUM BELIEVED TO MAINTAIN RELATIVELY
CLOSE CONTACT WITH SARG. HIS REMARKS THUS MAY REFLECT
HIS UNDERSTANDING OF SYRIAN LEADERSHIP'S VIEWS AND
INFORMATION ABOUT INTERNAL PLO POLITICS AND SYRIAN
STRATEGY IN LEBANON.
MURPHY

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NNN

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